FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
FY20 COPING WITH DROUGHT COMPETITION

GENERAL QUESTIONS
Q: Where can I find more information about the National Integrated Drought Information System?

A: https://www.drought.gov/drought/

Q: Where can I find more information about the NOAA Climate Program Office?

A: https://cpo.noaa.gov/Who-We-Are/About-CPO

Q: Where can I find all the details about the FY20 Notice of Federal Funding including the Coping with Drought completion?

A: https://cpo.noaa.gov/Funding-Opportunities/FY-2020-Notice-of-Funding-Opportunity

QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE FOCUS OF THE FY20 COPING WITH DROUGHT COMPETITION
Q: The Information Sheet talks extensively about "impact data". Do you have a definition of what is meant by impact data?

A: Impact data could be observational, quantitative, or qualitative. But, it is a record of the impact of the drought conditions on the environment, economy, etc. Impacts can be primary, secondary, or tertiary impacts. A simplified example is the connection between drought and wildfire. Drought dries vegetation, that can help fuel very hot wildfires which changes the soil and landscape and can lead to landslides in heavy rain events. Another example is tourism – drought could lead to low water flows which might impact the fishing/rafting but then also the service industry (hotels/restaurants) in the area.

Q: Can you also define threshold in context?

A: A threshold would be a certain level of indicator at which an action is triggered.

Q: The two focus areas are indicators and thresholds and impacts – but all 7 listed questions focus on impacts. Are proposals on just indicators and threshold also welcome?

A: Yes – the example questions are just that, we welcome proposals that are just focused on indicators and thresholds as well.

Q: Is it required for an applicant to be physically located within a DEWS region or an active participant with a regional DEWS?

A: The applicant would not have to be geographically located in the footprint of a DEWS (see DEWS locations here), but as was stated in the Information Sheet, there is a requirement for the applicant to clearly demonstrate relationships with partners and relevant sectors in a DEWS.

Q: Is there a preference for broad geographic coverage vs. focused on single DEWS region?

A: No – there is not a preference. This funding opportunity is seeking research proposals that benefit a DEWS or multiple DEWS.

Q: It appears there is not a regional DEWS in most of the Southeast. Are there NOAA/NIDIS partnership opportunities in the Southeast where there are no regional DEWS available?

A: The state governments themselves and watershed groups that exist within those states are examples. But please refer to the questions above, which notes that the benefit of the research to a DEWS or multiple DEWS should be demonstrated.

Q: Can you tell us more about what kind of collaborations are viewed favorably? E.g. multiple institutions, cross disciplinary, number of PIs, academia-government?

A: There are no requirements for having multiple institutions or a certain number of PIs. What we are interested in is seeing strong partnerships between the PI(s) and those beneficiaries of the research. Examples are listed under the requirements in the Information Sheet. Representatives from the public and private sectors; academia; local, regional, state, and federal government entities; tribal nations; NGOs; environmental groups; citizen groups, etc. We want to see deep partnerships with those who can provide subject matter expertise and/or who are beneficiaries to ensure the research results are incorporated into the DEWS. As an example: if you're looking at a sector or sectors – the PI(s) should be working with leaders from this sector so that this project that is being executed in coordination with the beneficiaries of the information.

Q: Do partnerships with relevant stakeholders need to be formalized in the Letter of Intent, or can PIs be in progress in developing those partnerships at that time?

A: For the LOI it is okay if they are in progress but for full proposal, they would need to be established.

Q: The Information Sheet states that "Preference will be given to those proposals that focus on industry and economic sectors beyond agriculture " Could you give more information about this? If a proposal is looking at multiple sectors and agriculture is one of them (but not the only/ or primary one), will this be viewed less favorably?

A: Yes – proposals that address multi-sector impacts are welcome, including ones that include agriculture. There is a lot of work/research currently being done related to

agriculture, it is not that it is not important but we would like to see work on other sectors of the economy.

Q: When you mention the impact reporter, is that the impact reporter that is run on the same site as the drought monitor? or does that refer to something else??

A: There is a Drought Impact Reporter, that along with the US Drought Monitor, is run out of the National Drought Mitigation Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This would likely be a consideration for a data source. However, in the Information Sheet and Notice of Federal Funding – we are talking about impact reporting writ large, not just the Drought Impact Reporter.

Q: Following up on the impact terminology - when you talk about "impact reporting" does this refer to reporting of potential impacts by NIDIS to the community, or reporting of impacts from the community to NIDIS, or something else?

A: Reporting of impacts from the community not only to NIDIS but others like state hazard planner, other state agencies, the Drought Impact Reporter, resource managers, other federal agencies, etc. Drought impact reporting could be from multiple sources and to multiple recipients – it is not limited in any way. And there may be ways of getting at drought impacts that have not been tapped yet.

Q: One of the questions in the information sheet is: "Does impact reporting reflect impacts as documented in impact assessments? And if not, how can impact reporting be strengthened through the integration of lessons learned from impact assessments and then used to streamline the impact assessment process?" Can you discuss this? Is it about assessing the success of the impact assessment reports?

A: The question that we hear and would like to explore is - are the impacts that are coming in during a drought representative of what we might see during an impact assessment post drought? Drought impacts are complex, some are immediate and some take time to develop – there can be a lag depending on sector. And just because a drought ends does not mean impacts cease. So how well are we doing at accessing the impacts we can during drought and then what is coming up through post drought impact assessments and is there anything we can do to better assess impacts in real time, during drought in the future.

Q: For the research question about impact assessments, do you mean the official drought assessments typically done as partnerships led by a state entity or university? I'm not clear what types of impact assessments are meant here. Does this include impact assessments reported from a commercial sector? Does this mean any assessment that is drought related?

A: Yes – we are referring to the types of assessments typically done by states, counties, industries, etc. post the event – to determine what the total impact the drought event. Any assessment that is drought related falls under this umbrella.

Q: Is biodiversity conservation / ecosystem services considered an economic sector?

    A: Yes

Q: If you were to rank the different sectors of interest (e.g. recreation/tourism, water utilities sector, public health, other) what would be the most appealing in funding??

    A: We do not have such a list of sectors in rank order of importance to NIDIS. We do want to see sectors beyond agriculture addressed as stated in the Information Sheet and we welcome your ideas through the LOI process.

Q: Should the proposed research contribute new methods and data to NIDIS or should the proposed research build upon current momentum?

    A: You may choose to do either. You could propose new methods and data, or you can build upon current momentum underway.

Q: Does the MAPP opportunity anticipate greater emphasis on data analysis and potential modeling?

    A: Please direct your question to the Program Manager of MAPP – that information is on the [Climate Program Office Funding Opportunity](#) webpage under Competition #3 and an informational webinar recording is also available for the MAPP competitions.

Q: Is it appropriate to reach out to your (NIDIS) team for feedback on whether certain topics are of interest?

    A: No, the LOI process is designed to provide feedback on relevance of your proposal in a structured way. Please submit your ideas through an LOI and if you have additional questions contact the program manager (Britt Parker: britt.parker@noaa.gov).

Q: Would proposals around - capacity building and training; or setting up the infrastructure to evaluation impacts on an ongoing basis; or a process for evaluating impacts on an on annual basis; or developing machine learning to predict economic impact; or establishing viable indicators/triggers for sector x in watershed y suitable for this competition?

    A: We cannot comment on specific project ideas, we encourage you to carefully read this research funding opportunity and submit a Letter of Intent. This is the process by which you will receive feedback on the relevance of your idea to this funding opportunity.

PROCESS AND FUNDING QUESTIONS
Q: Could you explain the "cooperative agreement" funding format/mechanism?

A: According to the grant-terminology section of www.grants.gov, a Cooperative Agreement is *a legal instrument of financial assistance between a Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity and a non-Federal entity that, consistent with 31 U.S.C. 6302–6305...and is distinguished from a grant in that it provides for substantial involvement between the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity and the non-Federal entity in carrying out the activity contemplated by the Federal award...* For more information on the difference between a grant and cooperative agreement see this Grants.gov blog https://blog.grants.gov/2016/07/19/what-is-a-cooperative-agreement/

Q: What do you recommend if an academic wants to partner with a federal agency? How should we proceed with a proposal submission?

A: In order to submit a proposal that includes PIs from both academic and federal agencies, the academic PI would submit a proposal through www.grants.gov and the federal partner would submit a proposal directly to the program manager (Britt Parker; britt.parker@noaa.gov). Both proposals should adhere to the funding opportunity guidelines. As per page 21, the proposals would be identical but with personalized budget information. If the proposed project is funded, monies would be distributed through two separate mechanisms – a cooperative agreement to the academic institution and an interagency transfer to the federal agency.

Q: If a grant proposal involves two or more institutions, should we combine as one or submit it separately?

A: Please read the Notice of Federal Funding carefully as it pertains to proposals involving multiple institutions - each institution should submit a proposal with common title and project information but with federal budget forms, narratives, etc. for their specific institutions. Please see more details in the instructions for full proposals.

Q: Is there a minimum amount of funds over the 2-year period? Or does it have to be for $650,000 or more?

A: There is not an established minimum amount that proposals can request. To clarify, proposals will be considered that request up to $650,000 over two years.

Q: During the webinar it was stated that proposals that receive a score of 3.5 or above from the technical review will proceed to the relevance review, but the slide deck said 3 and above. Which is correct?

A: Proposals that score 3 and above in the technical review will proceed to the relevance review. The slide on the review process was correct.